THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The two countries signed an extradition treaty on October 5,2004 at New Delhi during the visit to India of President of the Republic of Korea. The treaty will provide a legal framework for seeking extradition of fugitive offenders.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Not applicable.

Release of Indians by Pakistan

2530. SHRI DATTAMEGHE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that on 2nd March, 2005 Pakistan said that it would release at least 900 Indian fishermen and civilians held for illegal entry;

(b) if so, the details thereof and whether these 900 persons have since been released by Pakistan;

(c) Whether Pakistan has provided consular access to only 700 fishermen and civilians held in various jails for illegal entry and said that remaining 200 Indians would be released as and when Indian Government confirms their national status; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by Government to secure release of all Indians held in Pakistani jails?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government of Pakistan has so far confirmed the presence of 182 civilian prisoners. It has, so far, granted Consular access to over 650 fishermen and about 100 civilian prisoners in January and February 2005. Government of India has confirmed the nationality of 60 civilian-prisoners and 529 fishermen and is pursuing their release with the Pakistan Government. Following Government's efforts, 21 civilian prisoners were released on 17th March 2005. On 22nd March 2005, Pakistan released over 500 fishermen and 30 civilian prisoners.

(d) Government is actively pursuing the release of remaining Indian prisoners, who have not been granted consular access so far.